

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION ACDA-12

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NSAE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 H-01
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FM AMEMBASSY LONDON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2035
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
USMISSION USNATO
USDEL MBFR VIENNA

S E C R E T LONDON 00688

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PARM, NATO, MBFR
SUBJECT: MBFR: DATA DISCUSSION AND NEW INITIATIVE

1. IN COURSE OF DISCUSSION JANUARY 13 WITH ROLAND SMITH AT FCO, SMITH SAID THAT HE WAS "PERSONALLY" CONSIDERING POSSIBILITY OF DECOUPLING ISSUE OF DATA EXCHANGE FROM NEW NATO INITIATIVE. SMITH'S MUSINGS HAD BEEN STIMULATED BY FRG MBFR REP BEHREND'S WHO, WHILE IN LONDON TO PICK UP A CAR, HAD STOPPED BY THE FCO THIS WEEK. BEHREND'S TOLD SMITH THAT IF DATA IMPASSE PERSISTED, IT MIGHT BE IN WEST'S INTEREST TO BREAK LINKAGE BETWEEN DATA EXCHANGE AND THE NEW INITIATIVE. AT THE MOMENT, BY PREVENTING RESOLUTION OF DATA EXCHANGE PROBLEM, THE EAST POSSESSED A DEFACTO VETO ON NATO'S ABILITY TO TABLE THE NEW INITIATIVE. BEHREND'S OPINED THAT SOVIETS MAY WISH NEITHER A DATA EXCHANGE NOR A MORE DEFENSIBLE PROPOSAL BY THE WEST. SOVIETS MAY THEREFORE SIMPLY DRAG OUT DATA ARGUMENT IN VIENNA THROUGH THE NEXT ROUND AND THUS FORESTALL NEW INITIATIVE.

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2. WHILE BEHREND'S' COMMENTS WERE NOT OFFICIAL FRG POLICY, SMITH SAID HE WAS STUDYING THE IDEA. HE CERTAINLY THOUGHT THAT DAVID OWEN WOULD BE IRRITATED WITH THE LATEST GERMAN TEXTUAL SUGGESTIONS, WHICH SMITH DESCRIBED AS "LEGALISTIC AND TRIVIAL", AND WOULD BE IMPATIENT TO GET THE NEW PROPOSAL ON THE TABLE. THUS SMITH NOTED, OWEN MIGHT WELL BE ATTRACTED TO GETTING

ON WITH THE NATO INITIATIVE AND LEAVING THE DATA ISSUE FOR SUBSEQUENT ARGUMENT. SMITH ADMITTED THAT EVEN IF THE US, UK AND FRG AGREED IMMEDIATELY TO THIS COURSE, IT WAS HIGHLY UNLIKELY THAT IT COULD BE PUSHED THROUGH NATO IN TIME FOR THE OPENING OF THE NEXT ROUND. SO, SMITH CONCLUDED, IT WAS STILL NECESSARY TO TRY TO SORT OUT THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN FRG ON THE ONE HAND AND THE US AND UK ON THE OTHER DURING DISCUSSIONS IN BRUSSELS NEXT WEEK.

3. COMMENT. SMITH WAS OBVIOUSLY TO SOME DEGREE THINKING OUT LOUD AND WE WOULD NOT WANT TO GIVE TOO MUCH WEIGHT TO HIS REMARKS. NONETHELESS, IF THE SPC DEBATE STALLS, OR IF IT BECOMES CLEAR IN VIENNA THAT THE DATA EXCHANGE WILL NOT PROCEED ANY TIME SOON, BRITAIN MAY PUSH THE IDEA OF TABLING THE NEW WESTERN INITIATIVE ANYWAY.

BREWSTER

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NNN

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